

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 ARA-06 /092 W
 -----140851Z 128892 /12

R 140730Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3986
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 3036

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ET, PINS, PINT
SUBJ: CONTINUING PREPARATIONS FOR CAMPAIGN

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 2372, B. ADDIS ABABA 2691,
 C. ADDIS ABABA 2445

SUMMARY: DURING PAST TWO WEEKS THERE HAS BEEN EXPONENTIAL
INCREASE OF "CAMPAIGN" ACTIVITIES IN RESPONSE TO APRIL 12
AND 14 MENGISTU SPEECHES IMPLORING CITIZENRY TO ANSWER
CALL TO DEFEND REVOLUTIONARY MOTHERLAND. CASH CONTRI-
BUTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE FROM ALL STRATA OF SOCIETY AND
ARE APPROACHING US\$ ONE MILLION. MILITIA TRAINING CAMP
(SIGA MEDA) 26 KMS NORTHWEST OF ADDIS ABABA CURRENTLY
ESTIMATED TO CONTAIN 55-80,000 PEASANT MILITIA TYPES
FROM VARIOUS PROVINCES. ADDIS ABABA URBAN DWELLERS'
ASSOCIATIONS (KEBELES) CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS' LABOR
TO CAMPAIGN EFFORTS AT CAMP. ALLEGEDLY, MAJ. TEFERRA
WOLDE-TENSAE, FORMER GOVERNOR OF BALE AND SIDAMO
PROVINCES, SUCCESSIVELY, HAS BEEN APPOINTED CHIEF
ADMINISTRATOR AT SIGA MEDA AND IS RECEIVING FULL
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SUPPORT OF MAJ. DEBELA DINSA, PMAC MEMBER AND
CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL WORK CAMPAIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH COOPERATION (ZEMECHA). WHILE LARGE NUMBER
CUBAN ADVISERS LIKELY TO TAKE ACTIVE ROLE IN MILITIA
TRAINING, THERE PROBABLY ONLY DOZEN OR SO CURRENTLY
INVOLVED. ALTHOUGH COMMENCEMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF
CAMPAIGN NOT YET DEFINITELY KNOWN TO EMBASSY,

THERE WIDESPREAD SPECULATION CAMPAIGN LIKELY TO BEGIN EARLY JUNE, WITH INITIAL OBJECTIVE OF CRUSHING ANTI-GOVT GROUPS IN GONDAR REGION (EDU), TIGRE REGION (TPLF/TLF) AND SCATTERED NUMBERS OF EPRP IN BOTH REGIONS. MOVEMENTS OF TROOPS, MATERIEL, AND FUEL TANKERS ALSO HAVE BEEN OBSERVED ALONG TWO MAIN ROADS LEADING NORTH FROM ADDIS ABABA TO GONDAR AND MAKALE. END SUMMARY.

1. AS DIRECT RESULT OF APRIL 12 & 14 PMAC CHAIRMAN MENGISTU SPEECHES, EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED BY ETHIOPIAN PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT (EPMG) TO "DEFEND REVOLUTIONARY MOTHERLAND". ALMOST FROM OUTSET "VOLUNTARY" CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN ARRIVING FOR DEFENSE MOBILIZATION. IN ETHIOPIAN TV INTERVIEW, MAJ. ENDALE TESSEMA, PMAC MEMBER IN CHARGE OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND CENTRAL REVOLUTIONARY & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (RDC) CHAIRMAN, EXPRESSED PMAC'S SATISFACTION AT RESPONSE OF "BROAD MASSES" TO CALL. HE STATED NEARLY US DOLS ONE MILLION HAD BEEN DEPOSITED IN ADDIS BANKS AND CATEGORICALLY REASSURED POPULATION GOVT WOULD NOT IMPOSE ADDITIONAL SUR-TAX ON SALARIED PERSONS BECAUSE "VOLUNTARY" CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT. MAJ. ENDALE SAID CASH OR RAW GRAIN CONTRIBUTIONS OF LABOR WOULD BE NEEDED TO PREPARE FOOD AND TO ASSURE INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION DID NOT DECREASE AS WORKERS AND PEASANTS MOBILIZED FOR CAMPAIGN. MAJ. ENDALE CLAIMED "SOME OF THOSE
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MOBILIZED FROM POPULATION HAVE BEEN SENT IN ADVANCE" AND HAD BEEN ISSUED MODERN ARMS TO REPLACE WEAPONS THEY HAD BEEN USING IN PEOPLE'S MILITIA. REQUEST FOR TENTS (REF A), WHICH INITIALLY ANSWERED BY CONTRIBUTIONS SUFFICIENT TO HOUSE 100,000 PEOPLE, HAS BEEN EXTENDED UNTIL MAY 14 AND REPORTEDLY BECOME DEMAND RATHER THAN REQUEST.

2. MILITIA TRAINING CAMP AT SIGA MEDA, 26 KMS NORTHWEST OF ADDIS ABABA, HAS BEEN RECEIVING PEASANT MILITIA FROM VARIOUS PROVINCES PAST TWO WEEKS. IT RELIABLY ESTIMATED 55-80,000 CITIZENS CURRENTLY RESIDENT AT CAMP FOR TRAINING. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF UNSANITARY LIVING CONDITIONS, RUMORED OUTBREAKS OF CHOLERA AND TYPHOID, INADEQUATE HOUSING AGAINST COLD, AND ANTICIPATED DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS FOR LARGE, HETEROGENEOUS POPULATION. SOME TRAINING APPEARS TO HAVE BEGUN, BUT WEAPONS ALLEGEDLY ISSUED WITHOUT AMMO AND LOCKED UP EACH EVENING. ADDIS

ABABA KEBELES HAVE CONTRIBUTED LABOR OF WOMEN TO
PREPARE FOOD AND MEN TO CHOP WOOD. MAJ. TEFERRA
WOLDE-TENSAE (DEPT HAS EXTENSIVE BIO INFO),
ALLEGEDLY APPOINTED SIGA MEDA CHIEF
ADMINISTRATOR. ZEMETCHA CHAIRMAN, PMAC MEMBER MAJ.
DEBELA DINSA, PROVIDING FULL STAFF SUPPORT TO MAJ.
TEFFERA. IN FACT, MAY 13 ETHIOPIAN HERALD REPORTED
ADDIS ABABA OVERALL RDC HAD OPENED OFFICE WITHIN
ZEMECHA HQ'S. WHILE RELIABLE SOURCES BELIEVE
LARGE NUMBER OF CUBAN ADVISORS LIKELY TO TRAIN ASSEMBLED
MILITIA, ONLY HANDFUL CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING AT
SIGA MEDA.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 3036

3. PROBABLY FOR MILITARY AND SECURITY REASONS, EPMG
HAS NOT ANNOUNCED OBJECTIVES OF MILITIA CAMPAIGN,
OTHER THAN IN GENERAL TERMS OF DEFENDING MOTHERLAND.
EPMG OBJECTIVES CONTAINED REF C, STILL APPEAR
BEST EMBASSY ESTIMATE. THESE INCLUDE: CRUSHING OF
ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (EDU), IN GONDAR ADMINIS-
TRATIVE REGION, OF TIGRE POPULAR LIBERATION FRONT
(TPLF) IN TIGRE REGION, AND ELIMINATION OF FEW EPRP
GROUPS RUMORED IN GONDAR/TIGRE AREAS.

4. ORIGINAL EPMG ORDER TO FILL GAS STATIONS ALONG
TWO NORTHERN ROADS TO CAPACITY AND TO MAINTAIN NO LESS
THAN 50 PERCENT CAPACITY ONCE STATIONS HAD BEEN FILLED, HAS
RECENTLY BEEN ALTERED FOR STATIONS TO MAINTAIN 75 PERCENT

CAPACITY. THIS SUGGESTES COMMENCEMENT OF CAMPAIGN SCHEDULED FOR NEAR FUTURE. EMBASSY INITIALLY BELIEVED MILITIA AT SIGA MEDA WERE TO BE GIVEN TWO MONTHS TRAINING, BUT THIS WOULD HAVE EXTENDED TRAINING PERIOD INTO RAINY SEASON, WHICH NOT IDEAL TIME TO BEGIN MILITIA CAMPAIGN. THEREFORE, EMBASSY AND OTHERS SPECULATING CAMPAIGN MAY BEGIN LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE, CONFIDENTIAL

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WITH ONLY ONE MONTH OF TRAINING GIVEN TO MILITIA. LARGE MOVEMENTS OF TROOPS, HEAVY MATERIEL, INCLUDING FIELD ARTILLERY, APC'S, AND "TANKS" AND FUEL TANKERS HAVE BEEN OBSERVED PAST THREE WEEKS ON TWO MAIN ROADS LEADING FROM ADDIS ABABA TO GONDAR AND MEKELE. EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL BELIEVED TO HAVE GONE ONLY AS FAR NORTH AS GONDAR AND MEKELE, THUS SOMEWHAT DISPELLING SPECULATION MILITIA CAMPAIGN TO BE LAUNCHED IN ERITREA IN NEAR FUTURE. HOWEVER, THIS CANNOT BE RULED OUT FOR LATER DATE IF INITIAL OBJECTIVES ATTAINED.

5. COMMENT: WHILE COMMENCEMENT AND OBJECTIVE OF CAMPAIGN STILL SKETCHY, IT OBVIOUS EPMG MAKING MAJOR EFFORT. ALTHOUGH CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE IN FACT BEEN VOLUNTARY, MANY ETHIOPIANS HAVE EXPRESSED FEAR OF RETRIBUTION IF THEY DO NOT CONTRIBUTED TO CAMPAIGN. INITIAL EFFORTS AT TRAINING CAMP REPORTEDLY NOT GOING SMOOTHLY, WITH MYRIAD OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS DETRACTING FROM TRAINING. IT STILL TOO EARLY TO PREDICT EFFECTIVENESS OF MILITIA UNITS. HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES SUFFICIENT WEAPONS AVAILABLE IN COUNTRY TO ARM PEOPLE MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN DURING LAST YEAR'S PEASANT MARCH. MALIN

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